restricted range; *S. flavigula* is apparently uncommon within its known range; the unknown *Serinus* is known from only 5 records, of 1–5 birds spread over 20 years.

Acknowledgements

We are most grateful to the following for providing much help: Dr Nigel Collar for his comments on the original draft, Mrs Katie Gullick, Ato Girma Zekarias our guide, Aklilu Mekonnen our driver, and David O'Sullivan of Ethiopian Airways.

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The Namibian subspecies of *Cisticola chiniana* (Smith), 1843

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Received 11 September 1989

The Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* (Smith), 1843: Zeerust, western Transvaal, ranges from northeastern and eastern Africa to the south-central and southeastern aspects of the continent. A locally numerous species in *Acacia* and other open bush savanna types, it is the most highly polytypic species of the Afrotropical representation of the Cisticolidae. Fourteen races are admitted in the most recent assessment of its geographical variation (see Traylor 1986), but more recently, the number of forms has been raised to 16 by Parkes (1987), with the description of new taxa from the interior of Tanzania.

Work on the avifauna of Namibia (South West Africa) has drawn attention to the desirability of effecting major adjustments to the treatment of the *C. chiniana* subspecies present in the arid interior and west of the Southern African Subregion. The forms involved in the re-arrangement are *C.c. frater* Reichenow 1916: Damaraland, *C.c. huilensis* Rosa Pinto 1967: Lagoa Invantala, Huila, Angola, and *C.c. smithersi* Hall 1956: Pandamatenga, northeastern Botswana. From the entire territory of

Namibia, Traylor admitted the above listed races, with *C.c. frater* the most extensively distributed and *C.c. smithersi* present in the Caprivi Strip to the east and *C.c. huilensis* occurring marginally in the northwest along the lower Kunene R. In a report on a large collection from the mid-Okavango R. drainage of Namibia (Clancey 1980a), the local population of the Rattling Cisticola was referred to *C.c. huilensis*, and was so treated in the *S.A.O.S. Checklist* (Clancey 1980b). In order to resolve the conflict of opinion evident in the arrangements espoused in Peters' *Check-list* (Traylor 1986) and that in Clancey (1980b), I studied 70 specimens from a wide range of localities in Namibia and additional series from Botswana, Zimbabwe and other relevant territories in southern Africa.

With the material now available, especially that taken May–June, the variation of subspecific import is seen as relatively slight, with the populations present along the entire north of Namibia (including the Caprivi Strip) lighter, more tawny-headed and paler backed with finer dorsal streaking, than those more xeric elements occurring further south in both Namibia and Botswana. The variation pattern is, therefore, narrowly stratified south–north and extensively west–east. Of some significance, its disposition parallels closely that of the hygric *C.c. fortis* Lynes, 1930: Pedreira, Bié, central Angola, which extends from the Angolan plateau eastwards to southeastern Zaïre, northeastern Zambia and the extreme southwest of Tanzania. With northern Namibian, adjacent Angolan and Caprivi Strip birds all closely comparable, they require to be grouped into a single subspecies rather than 3 as at present, which arrangement results from the extension of the xeric *C.c. frater* to the mid-Okavango R. by most workers. This latter subspecies is actually narrowly restricted to the plateau of Damaraland, extending northwest to Kaokoland, where it merges into the paler Kunene R. drainage population placed by Traylor (and by Rosa Pinto) as *C.c. huilensis*. This intergradation shows up lucidly in the material brought back by the Bernard Carp/Transvaal Museum Expedition of 1951 and reported on by Macdonald & Hall (1957), the majority of the long series taken at Ohopoho (18°03′S, 13°45′E) and Sesfontein (19°07′S, 13°39′E). As given in Peters' *Check-list,* the range of *frater* is incorrect, and the names available for the northern pallid birds of Namibia: *smithersi* (1956)—eastern, and *huilensis* (1967)—western, are synonymous. All the northern Namibian and southwestern and southern Angolan populations will, therefore, take the earlier name of *C.c. smithersi.*

The geographical variation of the Rattling Cisticola in the South West Arid Zone of Africa is effected along strict isohyet contours and the availability of the main plant communities suitable to the species, with *C.c. smithersi* present in country with a slightly higher annual rainfall than that occupied by *C.c. frater*, which is c. < 500 mm. Should the data provided by Hall & Moreau (1970) be an accurate rendition of the species' distribution, the range of *frater* is clearly discontinuous or very largely so, with a population taxonomically similar to that of Damaraland occurring over southeastern Botswana to the east of the Kalahari. Introgression by *C.c. frater* is evident in samples from southwestern Zimbabwe (from near Bulawayo), but which are in the main referable to the nominate race. The distribution of *smithersi* is, on the other hand, continuous and covariant

with those of a wide range of races of passerines occupying the same general region, much of which is an ecotone.

In the east of its range *smithersi* lies in juxtaposition to *C.c. bensoni* Traylor, 1964: Liuwa Plain, Zambia, at 14°–14°45′S, 22°–22°45′E, in which subspecies wing-length increases somewhat, the pileum and hind neck in non-breeding dress are markedly darker (Dresden Brown, *versus* near Clay Color—capitalised colours from Ridgway 1912), while the mantle and scapulars are more heavily streaked. The buffy grey dorsal feather-fringes are on the whole more vinaceous than in *smithersi*. While generally restricted to the Liuwa Plain of western Zambia, *bensoni* is assuredly more wide-ranging, lying as it does interposed between the ranges of *smithersi* and *fortis*.

In so far as the Namibian populations of *chiniana* are concerned, these may be arranged in 2 subspecies:

Cisticola chiniana frater Reichenow

Cisticola frater Reichenow, *Journ. f. Ornith.*, vol. 64, 1916, p. 162: Damaraland, here restricted to the Windhoek district, Namibia.

Non-breeding dress. Pileum and hind neck about light Buckthorn Brown, finely streaked with a paler shade; mantle and scapulars Cinnamon-Buff, streaked with blackish brown. Venter white, the breast, sides and flanks warm buff.

Breeding dress. Dorsal head and hind neck dark dull brown; back dull olivaceous grey, streaked with black. Venter white, washed laterally with grey.

Measurements. Wings in 10 ♂♂ in non-breeding plumage 62–71 (66.6), sd 3.35; tails of 10 ♂♂ 62–68 (65.3), sd 1.96; wings of 10 ♀♀ 52–57.5 (55.9), sd 1.48; tails of 10 ♀♀ 51–57 (54.4), sd 2.11 mm.

Range. The plateau of Namibia from northern Great Namaqualand (north of the Tropic), north to southern and western Kaokoland and to the Waterberg and Grootfontein district, southeast of Etosha National Park. Re-appears east of the Kalahari in southeastern Botswana reaching Molepolole and regions to the north, as some specimens from near Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, agree with it. Meets the nominate race in the southeast of Botswana in the general area of Gaborone.

Cisticola chiniana smithersi Hall

Cisticola chiniana smithresi (*sic*) Hall, *Ostrich*, vol. 27, 3, 1956, p. 104: Pandamatenga, northeastern Botswana at 18°32′S, 24°41′E.

Cisticola chiniana huilensis Rosa Pinto, *Bol. Inst. Invest. Cient. Angola*, vol. 4, 2, 1967, p. 30: Lagoa Invantala, Huila, Angola.

Non-breeding dress. Head-top and hind neck lighter and more tawny than in *frater* (close to light Clay Color, streaked buffy); back paler and with finer dark shaft-streaking, the feather-fringes Pinkish Buff. In the wings, the outer vanes of the remiges are lighter, less cinnamon, those of the tertials often markedly greyer.

Breeding dress. Pileum and hind neck darker than in the case of *frater* (Mummy Brown), and the mantle and scapulars clearer grey (about Drab), the streaking finer.

Measurements. Comparable to those given for *C.c. frater*.

Range. Southwestern and southern Angola from Mossamedes, Cunene and southern Huila, east, south of the *Brachystegia* savanna biome to southern Cuando-Cubango and southwestern Zambia to about the Zambezi, and Namibia from the Kunene R. valley and most of Kaokoland north of 19°S to Ovamboland, the Etosha National Park (south of Etosha to Outjo and Otjiwarongo, and to the east of the park at Gaub Rhenisch Mission and Oshivelo), east to Kavango, the Caprivi Strip, the delta system of the Okavango R., northern Botswana, thence south to the Makgadikgadi Salt Lake and Lake Dow; also northwestern Zimbabwe, south to Gwaai.

Acknowledgements

For facilities at the State Museum, Windhoek, and the loan of Namibian material I am indebted to Dr J. M. Mendelsohn (Windhoek) and Dr A. C. Kemp, Ornithologist, Transvaal Museum, Pretoria.

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Variation in *Pterodroma brevirostris* (Lesson), 1831

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Received 11 September 1989

The so-called Kerguelen Petrel *Pterodroma brevirostris* was first described by R. P. Lesson on a specimen obtained at the Cape of Good Hope (Jouanin & Mougin 1979), but derives its English name from the field work of Dr J. H. Kidder (? 1840–1889) on the islands of Kerguelen in 1874. Interestingly, when dealing with this then obscure gadfly petrel for his work on the oceanic birds of South America, Murphy (1936) had but a single example and that from the Kerguelen archipelago (? taken by